

Message Text

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TAGS: SOPN, IN

SUBJ: INDIAN PUBLIC OPINION POLL ON EVE OF SECRETARY'S VISIT

BEGIN SUMMARY. JUST AVAILABLE SEPTEMBER POLL BY INDIAN AFFILIATE OF GALLUP FINDS MODERATE UP-SWING IN US IMAGE IN INDIA APPARENTLY BASED ON PERCEPTION OF IMPROVED INDO-US RELATIONS AND POSITIVE RESOLUTION OF WATERGATE. RESPONDENTS SEE INDIA'S TROUBLES LARGELY AS ECONOMIC. END SUMMARY.

1. DURING THE MONTH OF SEPTEMBER THE GALLUP-AFFILIATED INDIAN INSITUTE OF PUBLIC OPINION POLLED 1000 INDIANS (250 EACH IN BOMBAY, CALCUTTA, DELHI AND MADRAS) ON THEIR ATTITUDES CONCERNING A NUMBER OF INTERNATIONAL AND DOMESTIC POLITICAL ISSUES. THE RANDOM SAMPLE CONSISTED OF LITERATES IN ALL WALKS OF LIFE, 25 PERCENT OF THEM UNIVERSITY EDUCATED. PRELIMINARY ANALYSIS OF RESPONSES TO THE IIPQ QUESTIONNAIRE INDICATES THAT INDIANS SEE THE UNITED STATES IN A SOMEWHAT MORE FAVORABLE LIGHT THAN IN MARCH 1974, WHEN LAST COMPARABLE QUESTIONS WERE ASKED.

2. ON THE IMAGE OF FOREIGN COUNTRIES QUESTION -- "DO YOU HAVE A VERY GOOD, GOOD, NEITHER GOOD NOR BAD, BAD OR VERY BAD OPINION OF COUNTRY?" -- THE RESULTS OF WHICH ARE EVALUATED ON A WEIGHTED
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SCALE, THE US MOVED UP 51 POINTS SINCE MARCH TO A SCORE OF

120. THE SOVIET UNION DIPPED SEVEN POINTS TO 180, BUT RETAINED ITS FRONT-RUNNING POSITION. THE U.S., AN ALSO-RAN IN 10TH PLACE SIX MONTHS AGO, NOW IS THIRD BEHIND THE SOVIET UNION AND JAPAN.

3. WHEN ASKED WHETHER THEIR CONFIDENCE IN THE UNITED STATES HAD OR HAD NOT INCREASED DURING THE LAST THREE MONTHS, 39 PERCENT SAID THAT IT HAD, 13 PERCENT SAID IT HAD NOT AND 15 PERCENT SAID IT HAD STAYED THE SAME. COMPARABLE FIGURES FOR THE SOVIET UNION WERE 42, 7 & 16 PERCENT.

4. RELATED TO THIS QUESTION WAS ONE ON WATERGATE AND THE US PRESIDENTIAL TRANSITION. BY A FIVE TO ONE MARGIN THE RESPONDENTS STATED THAT THE ORDERLY TRANSFER OF POWER HAD INCREASED THEIR CONFIDENCE IN AMERICAN INSTITUTIONS. BY AN EVEN WIDER MARGIN OF EIGHT TO ONE, THOSE POLLED FELT THE UNITED STATES HAD GAINED, RATHER THAN LOST, FROM THE SERIES OF EVENTS LEADING TO PRESIDENT FORD'S ACCESSION TO OFFICE.

5. IN WORLD AFFAIRS, THE UNITED STATES HELD ITS TOP POSITION AS MOST INFLUENTIAL NATION. NOW, 62 PERCENT BELIEVE THE US IS MOST INFLUENTIAL AS AGAINST 55 PERCENT WHO FEEL THE USSR IS. IN MARCH 1974, IT WAS 56 PERCENT FOR THE US AND 51 FOR THE SOVIET UNION.

6. ANOTHER QUESTION WHICH APPEARED IN THE MARCH SURVEY ASKED: "HOW SATISFACTORY DO YOU FEEL RELATIONS BETWEEN INDIA AND X COUNTRY ARE AT THE PRESENT TIME?" JUDGING BY THE CURRENT RESPONSES, INDO-AMERICAN RELATIONS WERE THOUGHT TO HAVE IMPROVED. A COMBINED TOTAL OF 53 PERCENT SAID INDO-US RELATIONS ARE VERY OR FAIRLY SATISFACTORY AT PRESENT. SIX MONTHS AGO, THE FIGURE WAS 37 PERCENT. THE SOVIET UNION'S COMBINED TOTAL STANDS AT 83 PERCENT, HARDLY A CHANGE FROM LAST MARCH'S 84 PERCENT. THERE IS A LARGE GROUP STILL, 33 PERCENT, WHO FEEL INDO-AMERICAN RELATIONS ARE NOT VERY OR NOT AT ALL SATISFACTORY. HOWEVER THIS IS DOWN 15 PERCENT FROM MARCH. THE CORRESPONDING FIGURE FOR THE SOVIET UNION IS A MERE THREE PERCENT.

7. A FAVORABLE SOVIET IMAGE ALSO EMERGED IN AN IDENTIFY-OF-INTERESTS QUESTION. 43 PERCENT OF THE RESPONDENTS THOUGHT THAT SOVIET INTERESTS ARE VERY MUCH OR FAIRLY WELL IN AGREEMENT WITH LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

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INDIA'S. 36 PERCENT FELT THIS ABOUT AMERICAN INTERESTS. CORRESPONDINGLY, 20 PERCENT CHARACTERIZED THE INTERESTS OF INDIA AND AMERICA AS RATHER DIFFERENT OR VERY DIFFERENT. ONLY 12 PERCENT CHOSE TO SO CHARACTERIZE SOVIET INTERESTS. WHEN THOSE POLLED WERE ASKED TO GIVE SPECIFIC REASONS FOR INDIA'S INTEREST BEING AT VARIANCE OR IN AGREEMENT WITH THOSE OF OTHER COUNTRIES, POLITICAL AND ECONOMIC CONSIDERATIONS TENDED TO OUTWEIGH ALL OTHER FACTORS.

8. THE SURVEY ALSO INCLUDED A QUESTION ON THE STATE OF INDIA'S PROBLEMS, I.E. "WHAT, IN YOUR OPINION, ARE THE MOST IMPORTANT PROBLEMS FACING INDIA TODAY," NOT SURPRISINGLY, BETWEEN 80 AND 90 PERCENT OF THE SAMPLE VOICED CONCERN ABOUT THE ECONOMY AND DAILY LIFE; SHORTAGE OF ESSENTIAL COMMODITIES, INFLATION AND THE HIGH COST OF LIVING, POLITICAL CORRUPTION, UNEMPLOYMENT AND POVERTY. ONLY A MINUTE PART OF THE RESPONDENTS REFERRED TO OUTSIDE MILITARY THREATS AS A MAJOR PROBLEM.

9. COMMENT: THE SAMPLE (OF 1000) REFLECTS ONLY THE 30 PERCENT LITERATE POPULATION AND IS HEAVY, 25 PERCENT, ON UNIVERSITY-EDUCATED. THE FULL REPORT BEING FURNISHED TO USIA AND THE DEPARTMENT WILL SHOW THAT THESE DON'T KNOWS AND NO OPINIONS CATEGORIES ARE SIZEABLE. WHAT WE HAVE HERE ARE THE VIEWS OF A NEITHER OVERLY SOPHISTICATED, NOR TRULY REPRESENTATIVE CROSS SECTION OF THE INDIAN POPULATION.

HOWEVER, SINCE THIS IS ONE OF A SERIES OF SIMILAR GALLUP-GYPE SURVEYS CONDUCTED SEMI-ANNUALLY, IT DOES OFFER AN OPPORTUNITY FOR RECOGNIZING CHANGES IN THE GENERAL CLIMATE OF PUBLIC OPINION.

THE AMERICAN IMAGE, AS MIRRORED IN THESE POLLS, HAS HAD ITS UPS AND DOWNS OVER THE YEARS. THE MODERATE UPSWING SINCE MARCH PROBABLY REFLECTS A MORE POSITIVE GOI ATTITUDE TOWARD THE US WHICH GRADUALLY EVOLVED DURING THE PAST SEVERAL MONTHS AND WAS REFLECTED IN MOST OF THE PUBLIC MEDIA.
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